

Lamoine Vote on High School Tuition, Tuesday June 29, 2010

Information for Voters

From the Lamoine School Advisory Committee

The Choice: You will be asked whether you support spending town funds to pay a “debt service” charge in addition to the state-approved tuition to support Lamoine students attending MDI High School.

A “Yes” vote means you support this expenditure and direct the RSU24 administration to negotiate an agreeable amount with MDI.

A “No” vote means you do not support funding this additional charge.

High School Choice for Lamoine Students

Lamoine has for many years paid tuition for our students to attend high schools in the area. Our families still have that choice now that we are part of RSU24.

Tuition Costs

The State sets the tuition that high schools can charge for our students. A sending district can agree to pay more than this amount. If, as in this case, the RSU chooses not to pay additional costs, the town can consider doing so.

Who Pays?

The town used to pay the tuitions to high schools. Our school committee and the Town Meeting annually decided how much to pay. Now RSU24 acts for the town and is obligated to pay *at least the state-approved tuition rate for RSU24’s high schools* to support Lamoine students to attend a non-RSU24 high school.

Students attending Ellsworth High School, Sumner Memorial High School, or Hancock County Technical Center are *no longer paid for by tuition from Lamoine*. Lamoine taxpayers pay the town’s share of the actual cost of running these three high schools, as per the RSU24 budget.

MDI High School Tuition

The state-approved tuition for MDIHS is \$8, 896 per student. RSU24 is obligated to pay \$8263 of this (this figure is the RSU24 state-approved rate). The RSU is not obligated to pay the difference of \$633 per student between these two rates. Instead, they will bill this sum to Lamoine and the town is obligated to pay this amount.

The MDIHS Board requested 10 years ago that Lamoine pay an additional “Debt Service” amount for each tuition student in order to defray facilities-improvement costs to MDIHS. The Lamoine School Committee and Town Meeting have agreed to pay these costs for the past 10 years. MDIHS has 10 more years remaining on this construction debt.

What Are We Voting On?

The ballot on June 29 asks whether the town should continue to pay this additional “Debt Service” charge for students whose families choose to send them to MDI. For the coming year, MDIHS is requesting \$890 per student. The ballot directs the RSU24 to “negotiate” an amount agreeable to both Lamoine and MDIHS.

What Will the Cost to the Town Be?

Summary of Costs for MDIHS:

Tuition Rate Paid by RSU24:	8,263	
Tuition Difference Paid by Lamoine:	633	
Maximum Debt Service charge:	890	(paid by Lamoine)
Maximum Total:	9,786	

Our administration expects about 31 students to attend MDIHS next year. This means the additional expenditure to the town would, at maximum, be about \$27,000.

What Will the Cost be to the Lamoine Property Taxpayer?

This amounts to \$12 per \$100,000 valuation of your property. An owner of a property valued at \$200,000 would see an additional \$24 on her/his tax bill. We have been paying this Debt Service charge for MDIHS for the past 10 years.

The Ballot Question for June 29

To vote by secret ballot referendum on the following question: “To see if the Town will appropriate up to \$30,000 from undesignated fund balance (surplus) for payment to Mount Desert Island High School (MDIHS) pursuant to 20-A MRSA § 5805(4) as a debt service factor to augment tuition payments to MDIHS for Lamoine secondary students, and to authorize and direct Regional School Unit # 24 (the sending unit) to negotiate the debt service factor payment amount with MDIHS (the receiving unit) on behalf of MDIHS students residing in the Town of Lamoine.” (The Selectmen recommend a “no” vote)

**COME TO THE PUBLIC HEARING JUNE 14
6:30 AT THE LAMOINE SCHOOL
ASK QUESTIONS AND HEAR THE PROS
AND CONS !!!**

MDIHS and RSU24 officials have been invited to attend.